

THE ROLE OF ENVY IN CONSUMPTION

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International Business

Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor: Paurav Shukla

Date of approval: 8 April 2019

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Author: Leevi Halén Title of thesis: The Role of Envy in Consumption
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Objectives The main objectives of this study were to find how young consumers reacted to experiencing two different types of envy and would the envy type affect the willingness to consume or the effort to acquire the product, that is, if it would drive the respondents to conspicuously consume. The objectives also included finding if Attention to Social Comparison Information (ATSCI) affected the willingness to buy or effort to acquire the product. These phenomena have been studied separately, but not in conjunction as will be done in this thesis.
Summary The research of this thesis was conducted using a quantitative survey, where young consumers were asked to answer questions related to an imaginary situation that was created to incite the feeling of envy in the respondent. Based on previous research, it was hypothesized that respondents who experienced benign envy would be more willing to consume the product and would put in more effort to acquire the product. This study was not able to provide statistically significant results of differences of envy types in driving purchasing or effort of acquiring. However, it was found that the respondent who experienced benign envy and had a high score on the ATSCI-scale, were willing to put more effort into acquiring the product than other respondents.
Conclusions It could be concluded that no significant differences between the envy types were found in driving consumption, but based on the previous literature, benign envy is the driver for consumption, due to its emulation characteristics. This needs to be taken into account when marketing products to consumers. In addition, consumers who are aware of social comparison will make a larger effort to acquire goods to close the apparent gap of social comparison.
Key words: <i>consumer behavior, conspicuous consumption, envy, marketing</i>
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Envy is an old phenomenon, but it is still prevalent in every day interactions between people. It has been studied in many fields of academia, for example religion and economy (Hughes, A.W., 2010; Mui, V.-L., 1995).

In the modern world people are closer to each other than before due to social media and globalization. They get to see what people are doing on the other side of the world in an instance. This might strengthen the feelings of envy for the consumer. The global world has also made it easy to display one's conspicuous consumption to multiple people around the world simultaneously. When a new luxury product enters the market, the knowledge of it spreads around the world very quickly. This leads to people being very aware of new trends and in conjunction with social media, they know who are able to consume those luxury products. Thus, even though a lot of research has been done on envy and conspicuous consumption, it would be beneficial for companies to be aware of the ways in which they affect young consumers.

1.2. Research Problem

The role of envy has been studied from many different perspectives, as will become more evident in the literature review. There are some studies on the effects of envy to young consumers. For example, Benbasat et al. (2015) studied the effects of envy on young people from the point of view of social networking sites.

On the other hand, the research on conspicuous consumption has taken young consumers as their focus in certain studies. For example, Van de Ven et al. (2011) studied the effects of benign envy based on admiration of a similar other. This will also be the focus of this thesis alongside finding the effects of conspicuous consumption on young consumers.

1.3. Research Questions

This thesis aims to answer the following research questions (RQs).

RQ1: What is the role of envy among young consumers?

RQ2: What is the relationship between envy and luxury goods.

RQ3: What are the reactions of young consumers, when they observe similar others in possession of luxury goods?

1.4. Research Objectives

The research objectives for this thesis are:

- To see how two different types of envy drive young consumers' purchasing intentions.
- To see if the feeling of benign or malicious envy differ in driving purchasing decisions.
- To see if social comparison information in conjunction with either of the two envy types drive purchasing decisions.

1.5. Definitions

As described later in the literature review, Lange et al. (2018) developed an integrative theory of envy, the Pain-driven Dual Envy Theory, based on previous research (Smith & Kim, 2007, Van de Ven et al., 2009). According to the theory, after the initial pain of an unfavorable social comparison, people will feel either benign or malicious envy depending on other variables. Malicious envy brings the feelings of inferiority, animosity, and bitterness towards the envied person. The envier could also feel the need to bring the envied person down by making them experience an undesirable social comparison. Benign envy, on the other hand, is characterized by the feelings of admiration towards the person who is being envied. Emulation is also a strong feeling tied to benign envy. It is very important with regards to conspicuous consumption, because by emulation the envier could take part in it.

Conspicuous consumption is the 'showing off' side of consumption. In other words, it is consumption that is focused on acquiring goods to be displayed to other people. As stated before, benign envy and its emulation operationalization are very bound to conspicuous consumption.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The function of this literature review is to examine the key concepts and theories related to envy and conspicuous consumption. Firstly, the literature concerning envy will be discussed. The main theories that will be discussed are Dual Envy Theory, Malicious Envy Theory, Pain Theory of Envy and Pain-driven Dual Envy theory (PaDE). Secondly, the literature related to conspicuous consumption will be reviewed. Related to conspicuous consumption, the main theories are social comparison theory, compensatory consumption theory, and the inclusion/exclusion model. Lastly, the conceptual framework will be introduced.

2.2. The Theory of Envy

The main components of envy are the envier, the envied, and the envy object, which is the item that makes people feel envious of someone else (Bagozzi et al., 2016; Lange et al., 2018). The envier is the person who feels envy towards another human. In most cases the envied is very similar to the envier apart from not possessing the envy object (Smith & Kim, 2007). The feeling of envy arises because they feel inferior to the envied person with regards to the envy object. The envied is conversely the person who holds the envy object and therefore has higher status in the eyes of the envier. These three components are accepted as the key variables in the major envy theories (Smith & Kim, 2007; Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2007; van de Ven et al., 2009; Lange et al., 2018; Tai et al., 2012).

Envy is a pervasive emotion felt by humans and studied in many fields, including anthropology (Fish, J.M., 2008), religion (Hughes, A.W., 2010), and economy (Mui, V.-L., 1995). Despite this, envy can have very negative consequences. A study by Benbasat et al. (2015), found that in a social media context, envy can lead to 'lower cognitive functioning and well-being.' The study also found that envy will trigger self-enhancement to close the apparent gap between the envier and envied, which will then create a 'self-enhancement envy spiral.'

The main theories regarding envy, are Dual Envy Theory (Van de Ven et al., 2009), Malicious Envy Theory (Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2007), Pain Theory of Envy (Tai et al., 2012), and an integrative theory called Pain-driven Dual Envy Theory proposed by Lange et al. (2018). The theories only share the key concept of the triad of the envier, the envied, and the envy object. For example, Smith and Kim (2007) see envy as a purely malicious feeling, whereas other studies have formulated concepts of Dual Envy Theory (Van de Ven, et al. 2009) and the Pain Theory of envy (Tai et al., 2012), which suggest that envy can have a malicious and a benign side. The feelings, either benign or malicious, that arise from envying, depend on the relationships between the envier, the envied, and the envy object. (Bagozzi et al. 2016).

2.2.1. Malicious Envy Theory

Smith & Kim (2007) believe that the scholarly definition of envy contains 'hostile feelings' that can turn into 'hostile actions.' They recognize the use of the word envy in everyday situations, and state that the forms used in everyday conversation are closer to 'admiration and longing.' Similarly, Miceli & Castelfranchi (2007) believe that there should be hard boundaries on the conceptual level when describing envy. They explain that it is usual to use the word envy to describe emotions like admiration, jealousy, or emulation, but to stay away from conceptual looseness, envy should be used, as the term to describe the malicious feelings related to an upward comparison from the envier to the envied, at least in the academic field.

Miceli & Castelfranchi (2007) also state that even though admiration and envy are similar and share a few components, it does not mean that they can't be distinguished from each other, and that stating for example admiration as benign envy is changing the distinguishing components of envy. Smith & Kim (2007) suggest that it is reasonable to think that injustice does not have to be a part of the definition of envy, but still believe that resentment in one way or another is important to it.

Despite the strong arguments made by these authors, for the narrow definition of envy, it is very difficult to find which components fit the one-sided definition of Malicious Envy

Theory. With its hard boundaries on the terminology of envy, the theory might overlook many other components. In addition, the reason why benign envy is also considered as envy and not just admiration or emulation, is because benign envy still contains the pain and frustration of inferiority compared to another person (van de Ven et al., 2009).

2.2.2. Dual Envy Theory

Dual Envy Theory states that there are two types of envy, benign and malicious. Both types share the frustration and discomfort of the upward comparison made by the envier to the envied person (Lange et al., 2018). Both types of envies also intend to close the gap of the upward comparison with regards to the envy object.

However, the difference between these two types is that while experiencing benign envy, the envier will try to better themselves to close the apparent gap between them and the envied person, with regards to the envy object. Conversely, with malicious envy, the envier will feel ill will and malicious feelings toward the envied, and in some cases, take actions to fill out these feelings (Lange et al., 2018). That is, to close the gap by bringing the envied person down. To conclude, the focus of benign envy is on the envy object, and with malicious envy the focus is on the envied person (Crusius & Lange, 2014; Tai et al., 2012).

The concept of Dual Envy Theory is that the benign and malicious envy would give opposite results to certain components of the theory. Thus a result to a component on malicious envy, should yield an opposite result on benign envy (Lange et al. 2018). However, this isn't always true, because the theories share components, and are two different sides of 'one class of emotional experiences.'

Also, Dual Envy Theory is a good basis for a more inclusive theory of envy. Contrary to the Malicious Envy Theory, the Dual Envy Theory considers all of the possible components of envy. According to Lange et al. (2018) and their meta-analysis, the components include hostility, frustration, and injustice as malicious envy, and emulation, admiration, and desire as benign envy.

The Dual Envy Theory does not take pain into deeper consideration, and only recognizes that both benign, and malicious envy feel negative. It does not consider pain as the initial state, and driving force of envy, unlike Pain Theory of Envy, and in that sense, lacks the depth of the Pain Theory of Envy.

2.2.3. The Pain Theory of Envy

Tai et al. (2012) define envy as 'pain at another person's good fortune.' This is because they believe that previous research on benign envy and malicious envy have been focusing more on the consequences of envy and not what envy is itself. Like the malicious envy theory, the pain theory of envy sees envy as a uniform construct. After the initial feeling of pain, the envier will be led to several action tendencies, which are separate from the core of the theory.

This categorization of envy lacks the depth of the other theories of envy by only going through envy as the initial pain and later action tendencies and not fully categorizing the benign and malicious envy as the larger concepts they are. Despite this, it gives a good starting point for an inclusive theory and takes into account the earliest stages of envy forming between the envier and the envied.

2.2.4. The Pain-driven Dual Envy Theory

One goal for Lange et al. (2018), was to create an integrative theory on envy. They created two studies to integrate all of the components of envy from previous research. The need to create such a theory came because, according to the authors, the field of envy research is still conflicted and needed an integrative theory. In the theory, Lange et al. (2018) try to 'account for the emotional core of envy and its diverse motivational elements.' They use a data-driven approach to help with the integration of the core components. Data-driven approach was also chosen because it allows for the investigation of large amounts of information at the same time. The studies take components from previous studies and make respondents rate them based on the level of envy they experience.

From the studies, it could be found that three components underlie envy. They are benign envy, malicious envy, and pain. It was found that benign and malicious envy were perpendicular to each other, and both correlated positively with pain. This means that pain is the initial feeling of envy, and it transmutes into benign or malicious envy. This suggests also that both malicious and benign envy are a part of a larger group of emotions. Based on the findings from the studies, Lange et al. (2018: 592) suggest that the new definition of envy would be as follows.

‘Envy involves burdensome pain about being inferior to another person. It occurs as either benign envy, entailing a longing to improve oneself and emulate the envied person, or malicious envy, entailing hostile thoughts and intentions directed at harming the other.’

This definition would seem to cover the otherwise dispersed field of envy theories. It takes into account the initial feeling of pain that is associated with envy. This is a prominent feature of the Pain Theory of Envy, and therefore the theory is inclusive. The theory created by Lange et al. (2018) also considers the duality of envy in theory and combining the Dual Envy Theory to their approach.

2.3. Envy, Conspicuous Consumption, and Social Comparison

Conspicuous consumption comprises of the consumption, purchase, and display of unnecessary goods and services to show off one's wealth and the consumption of luxury goods and services to display economic power and wellbeing (Baskin et al. 2018). The goods and services that are considered conspicuous are highly visible and not necessary for survival, that is to show the superiority of the consumer towards other consumers. Conspicuous consumption is derived from an upward social comparison to close out the gap of inferiority (ibid).

Conspicuous consumption can be beneficial for companies manufacturing luxury goods and services. This is because consumers who seek status are willing to pay more for the goods, which can help companies to escape a price war by stating the value of their products (Flynn et al. 2010).

Social comparison between individuals affects conspicuous consumption but does not affect inconspicuous consumption, that is the non-visual side of consumption (Baskin et al. 2018). It has also been found that nonmaterial comparisons can lead individuals to conspicuously consume (ibid). This means that if an individual feels inferior in one area of their social life, they will conspicuously consume to try to close the gap of inferiority. Additionally, the happiness of a consumer should rise with their ranking in highly visible consumption, but not with highly unobservable consumption (Perez-Truglia 2013). Also, Winkelmann (2012) found that the higher prevalence of conspicuous consumption increases the rate of people being unhappy with their income. The focus for this study was luxury cars. To conclude, it can be stated that conspicuous consumption is more present when the goods are visible.

If two individuals are competing, they conspicuously consume, but if they are cooperating, they will not (Baskin et al. 2018). This means that people who are working together are not showing their wealth through conspicuous consumption to people they work with. On the other hand, if two individuals are competing, they would want to display their wealth, to gain an advantageous social position. Another factor thought to affect conspicuous consumption is significant others. It has been suggested that significant others of the consumer influence conspicuous consumption more than the consumer themselves (Charoennan & Huang 2018). This is interesting, because it could be assumed that the individual and their opinions would affect their own consumption the most.

Friehe & Mechtel (2014) found that the importance of conspicuous consumption was higher in East Germany, than in West Germany, and that the division has not converged significantly after the unification of Germany. This was an interesting finding because it points to an assumption that conspicuous consumption is more important in less prosperous countries and areas. Moav & Neeman (2012) found that societies with lower human capital spend more on conspicuous consumption. This is supported also by Baskin et al. (2018), who found that an upward social comparison will drive conspicuous consumption only if the consumers have a low self-concept clarity (SCC). Also, if consumers have a high self-concept clarity, they will most likely not conspicuously consume. SCC could be the underlying concept between all these findings (ibid). On the

other hand, maternalistic societies care less about conspicuous consumption (Moav & Neeman, 2012).

Two studies focused on Chinese consumers. Jenkins (2016) found that Chinese consumers are 20% more likely to care about peer beliefs on their consumption than American consumers are. Podoshen et al. (2010) found that both materialism and conspicuous consumption are on the rise among urban Chinese consumers. This points to the finding made by Friehe & Mechtel (2014) that in less prosperous countries and areas conspicuous consumption is regarded as more important.

Social media services are a good tool to boost demand for conspicuous consumption and luxury brands (Thoumrungroje 2014). Heffetz (2011) also found that the visibility of a good raises income elasticity towards that product. It could be stated that the visibility of a good in social media makes it more desirable for consumers who wish to conspicuously consume, and raises the consumers' income elasticity. Also, if the luxury brands were shown in a vlog on YouTube, perceptions of them were enhanced. Consumers who saw themselves similar to the vloggers, viewed products shown in the videos in a better light (Lee & Watkins 2016). This is very similar to the benign envy condition, because of the similarity aspect of the envied.

Conspicuous consumption might be driven by benign envy. The cause to this might be the emulation characteristics that have been identified in benign envy (Lange et al. 2018). The way benign envy drives the envier to try to level themselves up to the level of the envied, is with a feeling of "I want to be like them."

Based on this literature the following hypotheses can be made:

H1: Benign envy drives conspicuous consumption more than malicious envy does.

H2: The higher the level of ATSCI, the more a person will conspicuously consume.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

As stated previously in this literature review and based on the pain-driven dual envy theory hypothesized by Crusius et al. (2018), envy is a two-sided emotion with either malicious or benign feelings. As shown on figure 1, pain is the initial feeling that then transmutes into benign or malicious envy (Tai et al. 2012). With benign envy, the envier will then try to close the gap created by the initial upward comparison and they will do it by conspicuously consuming to try to seem to be on the same social level as they were before.

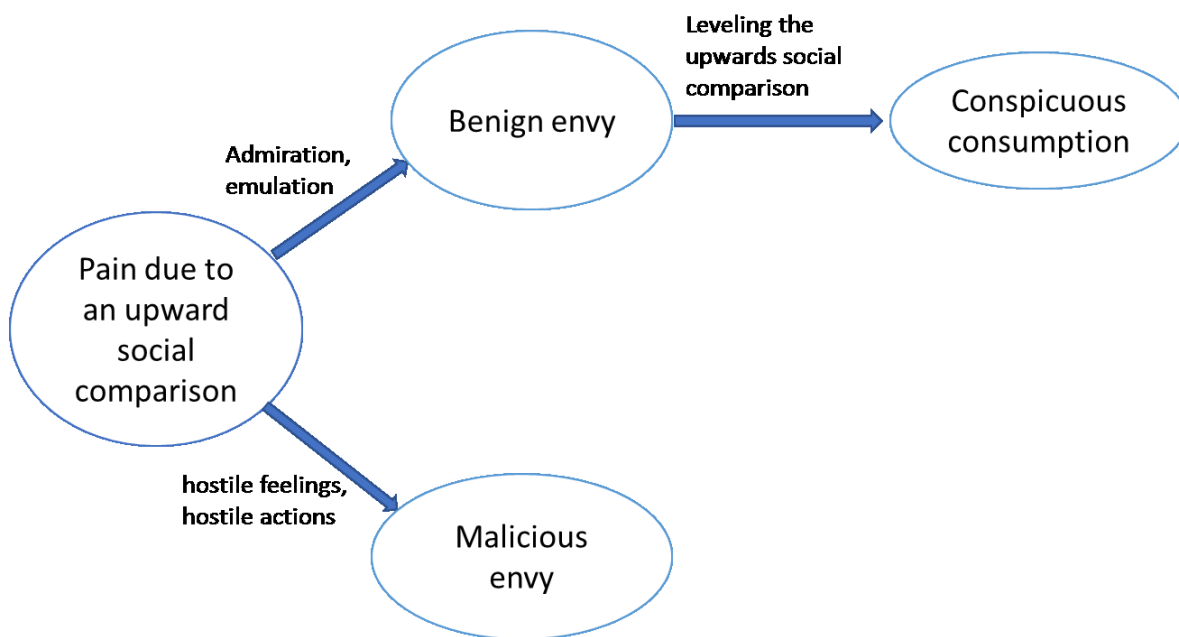


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework on Envy

2.5. Conclusion

What we can conclude from the literature is that envy constitutes of initial pain, benign, and malicious envy. The point of view of young consumers has been considered in envy literature (Benbasat et al. 2015). For example, Van de Ven et al. (2011) studied the envy premium of product evaluations that focused on the conspicuous consumption from the point of view of young consumers.

The conceptual framework presented in figure 1 shows a depiction of the Pain-driven Dual Envy Theory and the subsequent possible conspicuous consumption caused by it. The

framework starts from the initial feeling of pain and then depending on other factors at play develops into malicious or benign envy. Then if one of the driving forces towards benign envy was emulation, it would trigger conspicuous consumption to try to level out the unwanted social comparison.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were utilized in this research. The findings and analysis of the secondary data are discussed in the literature review section. The data was used to create a conceptual framework. The literature was also used for formulating the questionnaire used to gather the primary information. The form chosen for the primary data gathering was an online questionnaire that was developed to test the research questions.

For the primary research, an online questionnaire was created using a questionnaire tool called Webropol. This method was chosen, because it suited well for gathering quantitative information from a large amount of people. The questionnaire would also yield results that were objective and easier to analyze than qualitative data. Focus groups could have yielded more in-depth answers to the imaginary situation of envy, but the convenience of analysis the questionnaire gave was significant. Convenience sampling was chosen as it best suited the needs of this thesis, with the boundary condition of sharing it with young people.

The questionnaire was shared on social media within a student group, and it was also emailed to the students of Aalto University's Mikkeli campus. This group of people was targeted because they fit the desired category of a young consumer. Before publishing the survey, it was tested on multiple devices to make sure it works in the way desired. The questionnaire used for the primary data collection can be found in Appendix A.

3.2. Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire had three distinct sections; demographic questions, imaginary situation concerning envy, and a section which included manipulation checks and an Attention to Social Comparison Information (ATSCI) scale.

The demographic section asked for the respondent's age, gender, nationality, occupation, marital status, and education. If the respondent put their age as under 17 years or over 30 years, they were not allowed to continue. The occupation question was a multiple choice question between the options Working, Unemployed, and Student. Marital status included the options Single, In a relationship, Married, and Separated. The respondent education question had the answer options of No education, High school, University student, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, and Doctoral degree.

The second part of the questionnaire focused on an imaginary situation where the respondent was asked to think of a situation where they were at a social gathering with people from their school. In the social gathering their friend, who is told to be very similar to them, tells them that they have got a new phone. Depending on, which imaginary situation the respondent was given they were told that the friend had got the phone by either working hard or got it as a gift from their parents.

This was designed to spark either benign or malicious envy in the respondent. Benign envy was designed to be felt when the friend had worked hard to gather money to buy the phone, and therefore spark admiration and possibly emulation. On the other hand, malicious envy was designed to be felt when the friend had got the phone as a gift and therefore might be somehow undeserving the phone.

After the respondent had gone through the imaginary situation, they were asked to rate how much they would want that product, how much effort they were willing to spend to acquire the phone, how much they thought that others would like to have that product, and how much effort they thought others were willing to put to acquire the phone. These questions were measured on a 10-point Likert Scale with the endpoints "Not at all" (0) and "Definitely" (9). These questions were taken from the study made by Van de Ven et al. (2011).

The manipulation checks were conducted to make sure that respondents had filled the questionnaire carefully. This would have led to them being disregarded. The manipulation checks asked the respondents to tell what product was mentioned in the imaginary situations, what the price of the product was, and how the phone had been acquired. The

latest was meant to check if the distribution of the envy types matched with what the respondents had seen.

The ATSCI scale was placed at the end of the questionnaire. The scale included items to measure the level of attention to social information and cues that a person notices. The scale was created by Lennox & Wolfe (1984). A person who scores high on the ATSCI scale is very aware of the reactions their actions get from other people, and they care about what other people think about them.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Demographics

The main focus of this thesis was young consumers. Therefore, the ages of the respondents ranged from 16 years to 27 years, with the mean age being 21 years. The total number of respondents was 85 people, 37 of which were male and 48 were female. Out of the respondents, 80% were Finnish (n=68). The second largest nationality group was Vietnamese (n=7). The questionnaire had three French respondents, two Australians, and single respondents from China, Colombia, Hong Kong, Poland, and Switzerland.

All of the respondents were either single (n=42) or in a relationship (n=43). Out of the respondents 69 were students, while 13 were working and 3 were currently unemployed. 55 respondents stated that they were university students, 14 had a bachelor's degree, 12 were educated on high school level, and four had a master's degree. No one responded to having no education or a doctoral degree.

4.2. Advance Data Analysis

The questionnaire had one scale, the Attention To Social Comparison Information scale that had 13 items in it. After reverse coding the last item of the scale, a reliability test was conducted with IBM's SPSS software to see if the ATSCI scale had internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha reliability test yielded a result of 0.665. Anything with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.700 or over is considered reliable, and this means that the scale is almost reliable. Despite the fact that the reliability of the scale is under 0.700, it is very close to being reliable and it has been shown to be reliable by previous research (Bearden & Rose 1990).

4.3. Hypotheses Testing

H1: Benign envy drives conspicuous consumption more than malicious envy does.

The first hypothesis was tested with multiple t-tests to see if there was a difference between the two envy types in relation to self-purchase intention, self-effort for purchase, others purchase intention, and others effort for purchase. The respondents were asked to rate the how much they thought that others would like to purchase the product and how much effort they would put to acquire the product.

Group Statistics

	Envy type (1 = Benign -1 = Malicious)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SELPURINT	Malicious	42	6,3333	2,61017	,40276
	Benign	42	5,9762	2,57083	,39669

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
SELPURINT	Equal variances assumed	,021	,886	,632	82	,529	,35714	,56531	-,76744	1,48173
	Equal variances not assumed			,632	81,981	,529	,35714	,56531	-,76744	1,48173

Figure 2. Self-purchase intention t-test

From figure 2 it can be seen that the difference in means for purchase intention for people who experienced the malicious envy situation and the benign envy situation is not very large ($M_{Mal.} = 6.3333$ & $M_{Ben.} = 5.9762$). The standard deviation is also very similar ($SD_{Mal.} = 2.61017$ & $SD_{Ben.} = 2.57083$). Moreover, the 2-tailed significance is 0.529, which is much larger than the accepted upper limit of 0.05 to be significant. From this, it can be concluded that the two different envy types do not make a difference to an individual's purchasing intentions.

Group Statistics					
	Envy type (1 = Benign -1 = Malicious)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SELFEFFORT	Malicious	42	4,8095	2,06289	,31831
	Benign	42	4,6667	2,13755	,32983

Independent Samples Test										
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
SELFEFFORT	Equal variances assumed	,255	,615	,312	82	,756	,14286	,45838	-,76900	1,05472
	Equal variances not assumed			,312	81,897	,756	,14286	,45838	-,76902	1,05473

Figure 3. Self-effort t-test

Both of the envy types in conjunction with the effort people stated they were willing to put towards getting the product were presented in figure 3. The mean and standard deviation were very similar with both of the envy types ($M_{\text{Mal}} = 4.8095$ & $M_{\text{Ben.}} = 4.6667$; $SD_{\text{Mal.}} = 2.06289$ & $SD_{\text{Ben.}} = 2.13755$). The 2-tailed significance of the effort to acquiring the product for the self is also very high and therefore means that there is no significance between the two envy types when compared to self-effort.

Group Statistics									
Envy type (1 = Benign -1 = Malicious)		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean				
OTHRPURINT	Malicious	42	7,7619	1,99768	,30825				
	Benign	42	7,2381	1,91030	,29477				

Independent Samples Test									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
									Lower Upper
OTHRPURINT	Equal variances assumed	,135	,714	1,228	82	,223	,52381	,42650	-,32464 1,37226
	Equal variances not assumed			1,228	81,837	,223	,52381	,42650	-,32466 1,37228

Figure 4. Others' purchase intention t-test

Group Statistics									
Envy type (1 = Benign -1 = Malicious)		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean				
OTHREFFORT	Malicious	42	6,4048	1,68291	,25968				
	Benign	42	5,9048	1,60502	,24766				

Independent Samples Test									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
									Lower Upper
OTHREFFORT	Equal variances assumed	,167	,684	1,393	82	,167	,50000	,35884	-,21385 1,21385
	Equal variances not assumed			1,393	81,817	,167	,50000	,35884	-,21388 1,21388

Figure 5. Others' effort t-test

As was with the self-evaluation of purchase intentions and effort, the evaluation of others yields very similar results. The means and standard deviations had no real differences between the envy types for either effort for purchase or purchase intention. What was similar for both envy types and all factors, was that the effort to acquire the product was rated lower than the like to have the product. What can be gathered from this is that the first hypothesis does not hold up to the hypothesis testing.

What could be seen is that there is no distinct difference between benign and malicious envy in relation to willingness to consume.

H2: The higher the level of ATSCI, the more a person will conspicuously consume.

To test the second hypothesis a 2 (high vs low social comparison) x 2 (benign vs malicious envy) analysis of variance was created.

The division between high and low social comparison was created by dividing the sample to two groups of level either higher or lower than the median. Then all of the categories of purchase intentions and effort of acquiring, both self and others', was tested.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: SELFPURINT

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	113,556 ^a	3	37,852	6,891	,000	,205
Intercept	3193,095	1	3193,095	581,312	,000	,879
ENVYTYPE	,119	1	,119	,022	,883	,000
MEDSOCCOMP	105,951	1	105,951	19,289	,000	,194
ENVYTYPE * MEDSOCCOMP	5,192	1	5,192	,945	,334	,012
Error	439,433	80	5,493			
Total	3735,000	84				
Corrected Total	552,988	83				

a. R Squared = ,205 (Adjusted R Squared = ,176)

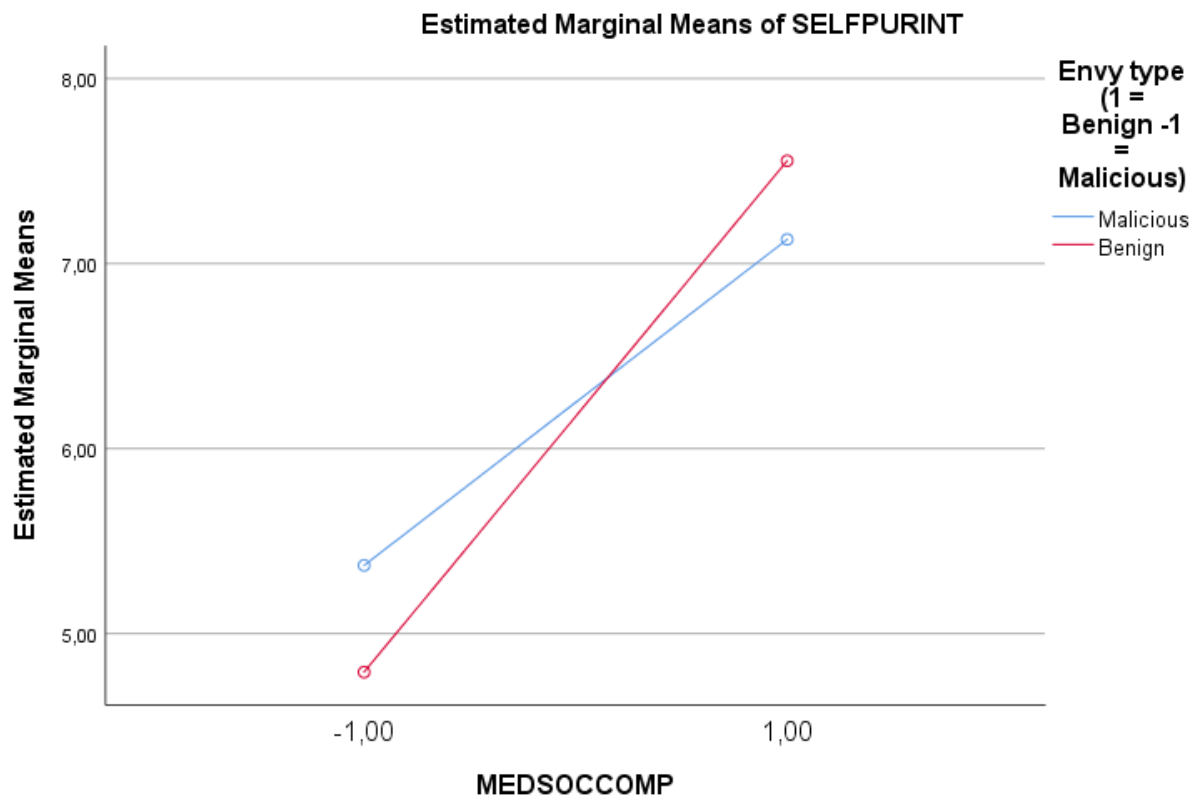


Figure 6. Table of 2 x 2 ANOVA with purchase intention of self

From the graph, it can be interpreted that the higher a person scores on the ATSCI scale, the more they are willing to purchase the product. Also, there is no significant difference between the malicious and benign envy types with regards to purchase intentions of self. Although, the 2-tailed significance is over 0.05, which means that the result is not statistically significant.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: SELFEFFORT

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	53,704 ^a	3	17,901	4,642	,005	,148
Intercept	1913,078	1	1913,078	496,043	,000	,861
ENVYTYPE	,028	1	,028	,007	,932	,000
MEDSOCCOMP	36,520	1	36,520	9,469	,003	,106
ENVYTYPE * MEDSOCCOMP	17,040	1	17,040	4,418	,039	,052
Error	308,534	80	3,857			
Total	2248,000	84				
Corrected Total	362,238	83				

a. R Squared = ,148 (Adjusted R Squared = ,116)

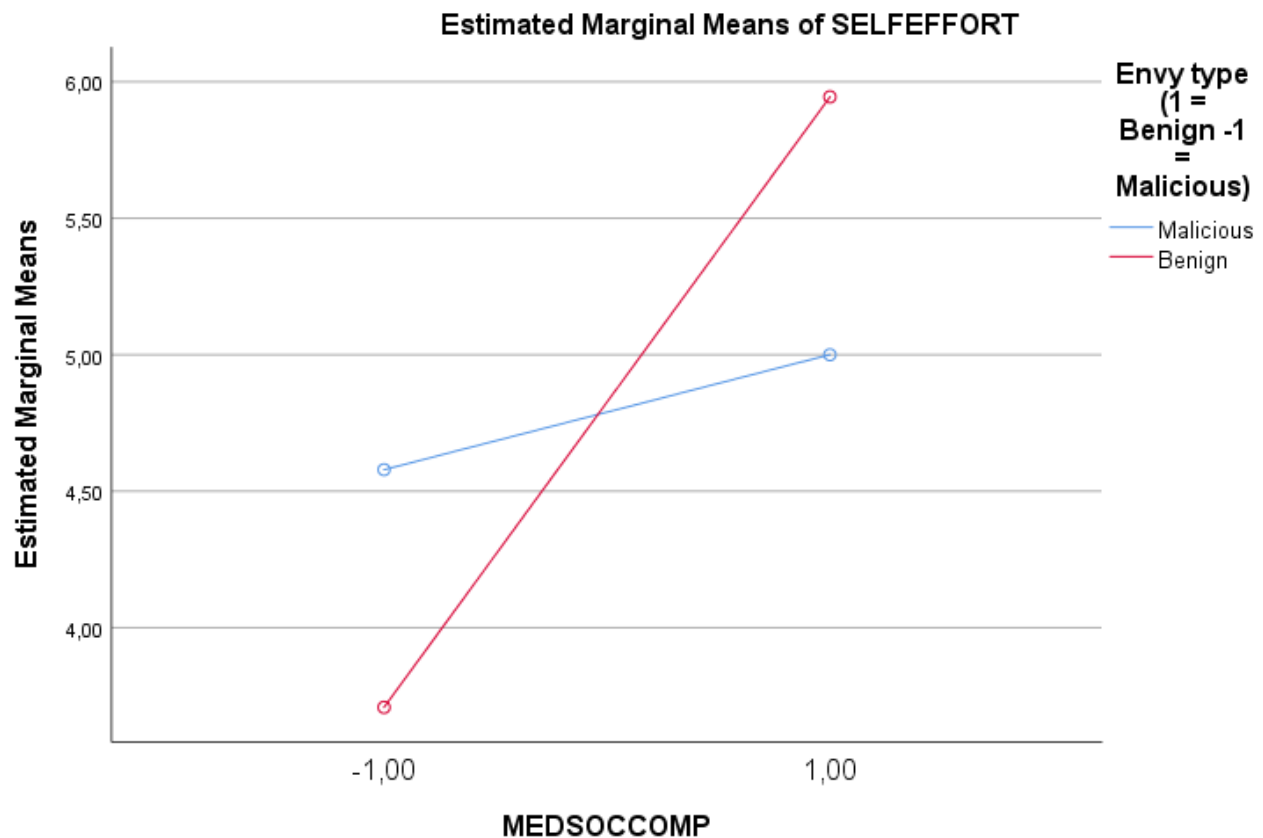


Figure 7. Table of 2 x 2 ANOVA with effort to acquire by self

The level of effort to acquire by self is growing for both envy types as the level of ATSCI is growing, but for benign envy the level change is significant. This would suggest that people who score high on the ATSCI scale, i.e. are more aware and interested about what people think about them, and experience benign envy, would be more willing to put high

levels of effort into acquiring the product. The significance level is lower than 0.05 so the results can be deemed as statistically significant.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: OTHRPURINT

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	21,775 ^a	3	7,258	1,954	,128	,068
Intercept	4665,852	1	4665,852	1255,845	,000	,940
ENVYTYPE	3,648	1	3,648	,982	,325	,012
MEDSOCCOMP	15,985	1	15,985	4,303	,041	,051
ENVYTYPE * MEDSOCCOMP	,021	1	,021	,006	,940	,000
Error	297,225	80	3,715			
Total	5044,000	84				
Corrected Total	319,000	83				

a. R Squared = ,068 (Adjusted R Squared = ,033)

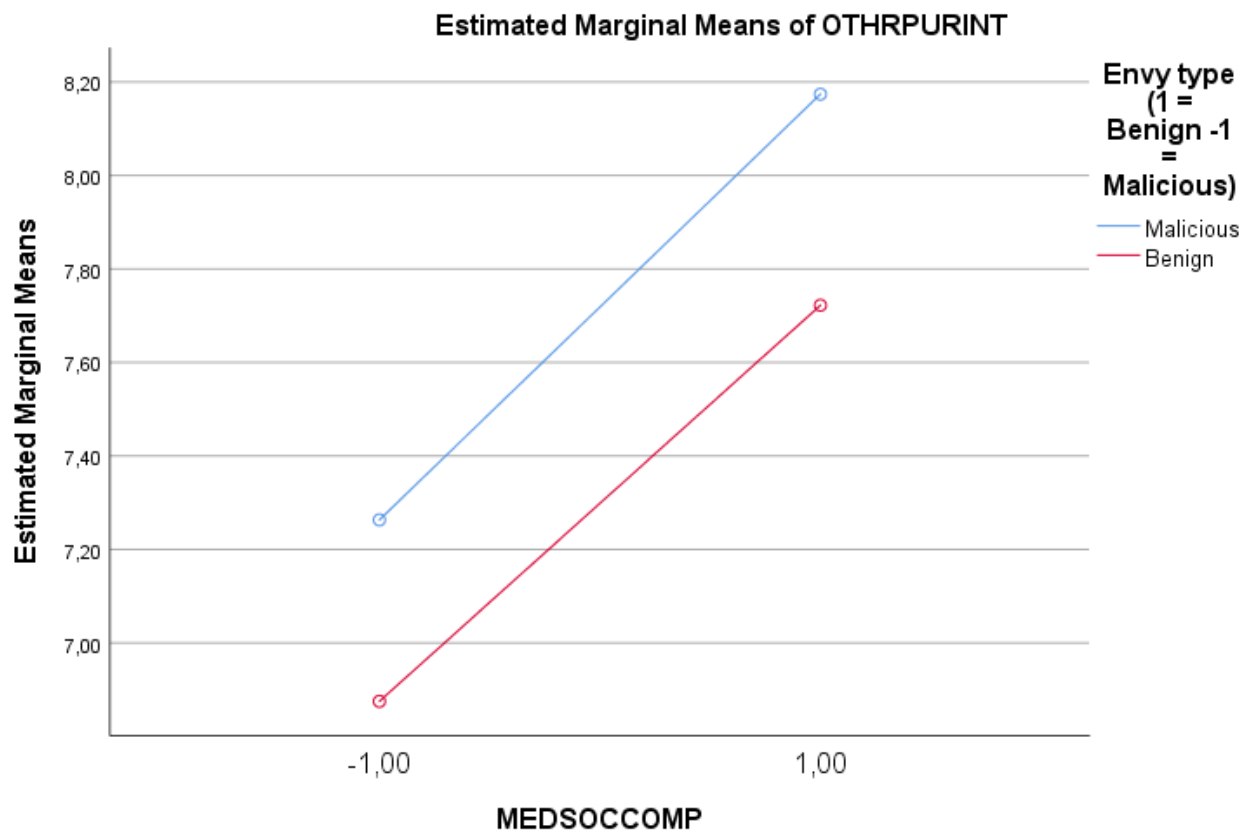


Figure 8. Table of 2 x 2 ANOVA of purchase intention of others

Significant growth for others' purchase intentions is shown as the level of ATSCI rises in both envy types as shown in figure 8. Despite that, the 2-tailed significance is over 0.05 and cannot be therefore considered reliable.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: OTHREFFORT

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	14,589 ^a	3	4,863	1,832	,148	,064
Intercept	3172,534	1	3172,534	1194,935	,000	,937
ENVYTYPE	3,979	1	3,979	1,499	,224	,018
MEDSOCCOMP	3,466	1	3,466	1,305	,257	,016
ENVYTYPE * MEDSOCCOMP	5,925	1	5,925	2,232	,139	,027
Error	212,399	80	2,655			
Total	3409,000	84				
Corrected Total	226,988	83				

a. R Squared = ,064 (Adjusted R Squared = ,029)

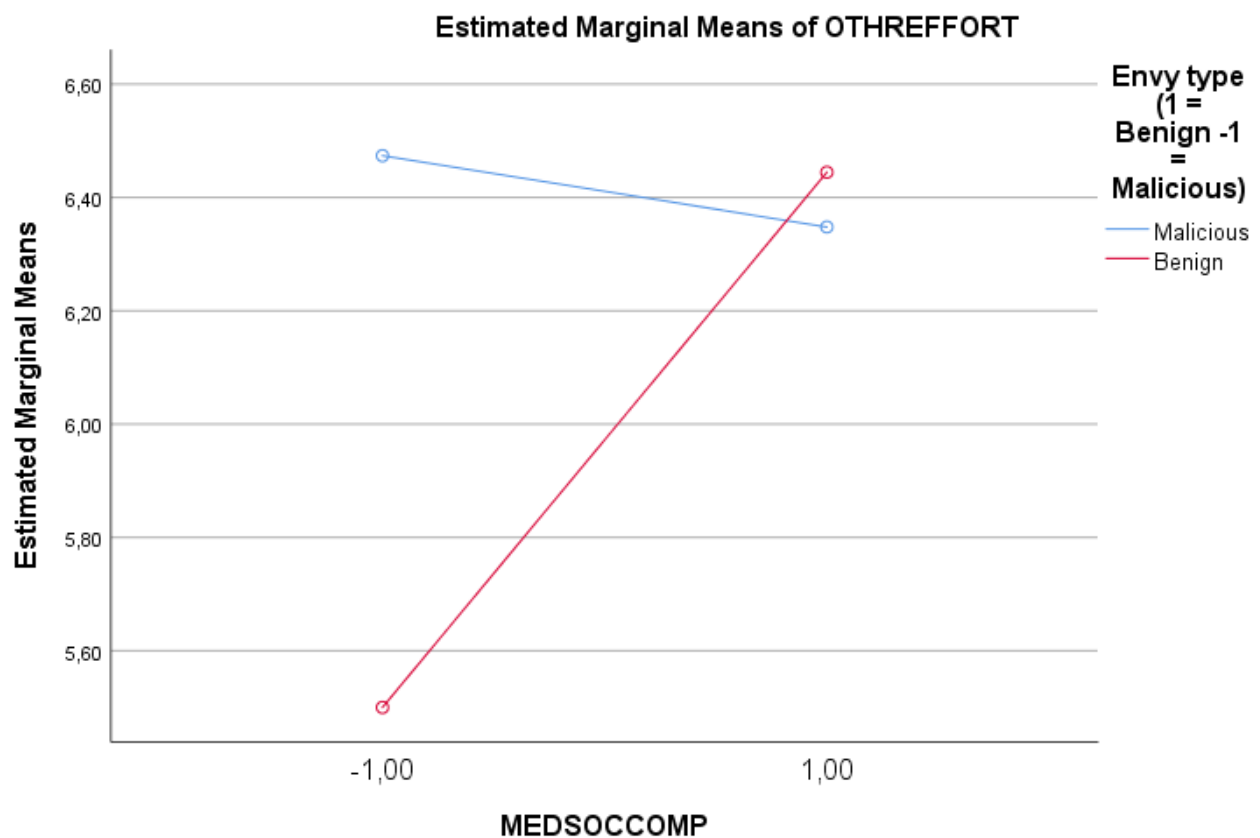


Figure 9. Table of 2 x 2 ANOVA of effort to acquire of others'

People who have a low level of ATSCI and encountered malicious envy thought people would have a relatively high level of effort to acquire the product, as shown in figure 9. This belief goes down a little bit when the respondent's ATSCI level rises.

This is almost reverse for people who experienced benign envy. Those of them who have a low level of ATSCI think that people would not have a high level of effort to acquire the product, but when their ATSCI level increases they are very certain that people have are willing to put a high amount of effort into acquiring the product.

However, the 2-tailed significance is over 0.05, which means that the findings are not reliable.

5. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The aim of this thesis was to find how young consumers react to seeing luxury products shown to them by their similar others, and being tied to different envy situations. The main findings of the research contradict the current literature on some issues. The specific issues will be discussed later in this section. The research provided new insights by combining the ATSCI-scale with the envy information.

H1: Benign envy drives conspicuous consumption more than malicious envy does.

The data analysis made it clear that there is no significant difference between the envy types in driving conspicuous consumption. The willingness to buy and effort to acquire the product did not vary between the envy type even between the self and others. However, the result was not statistically significant, so this conclusion is not completely reliable. This is contradictory to the existing literature. Lange et al. (2018) identified an emulation feature in benign envy, that would grant a larger amount conspicuous consumption. On the other hand, malicious envy has operationalizations that focus on bringing the envied down. The research did not find a significant difference between the two envy types with regards to conspicuous consumption and willingness to buy the product in question. The reasons for this might come from the structure of the questionnaire and its imaginary situation. For example, the wording of the imaginary situation might not have been strong enough to evoke a feeling of either benign or malicious envy. It might also be that the envy object might not have been chosen well enough for the respondent to feel envy. In addition, the price point of 1000 euros might discourage some respondents and therefore not make them feel envy. Even if the imaginary situation pushed the respondents to feel envious of their similar other, they might be content with their own phone and not therefore want to have the phone their friend had.

H2: The higher the level of ATSCI, the more a person will conspicuously consume.

The data analysis suggested that people who have experienced benign envy might not want the product more, but are willing to put more effort into acquiring the product, when their level of ATSCI rises. This means that the more the respondents who experienced benign envy cared about what others think about them, the more they want to put effort

into acquiring the product. This could suggest that people who score high on ATSCI-scale find it important to be seen well in others' eyes and therefore are willing to put in more effort to acquire products that achieve that. Conversely, the people with a low ATSCI score do not think that people would like to put effort into acquiring the product. Existing literature does not address this.

RQ1: What is the role of envy among young consumers?

The role of envy among young consumers was not identified clearly enough. The literature review touched upon envy and young people stating that envy has the effect of lowering cognitive behavior and well-being. (Benbasat et al. 2015). The difference between benign envy and malicious envy was not clear except in relation with the ATSCI scale. This means that the difference was only found reliably in one area, the effort to acquire by self. In the data analysis section, the difference of the means of purchase intentions was discussed to find if there were differences between benign and malicious envy. The study found no statistically significant differences on the purchase intention of self between the envy types.

RQ2: What is the relationship between envy and luxury goods?

The question of the relationship between envy and luxury goods was addressed in the literature review section. Flynn et al. (2010) stated that people who seek status are beneficial to companies that can point out their luxury value of their products and therefore removing the need to enter a price war with competitors. Also, happiness is reached with placing higher in a ranking with regards to highly visible consumption (Perez-Truglia, 2013). This study was not able to give an answer to this question.

RQ3: What are the reactions of young consumers, when they observe similar others in possession of luxury goods?

The levels for wanting to have the product were higher than the levels of effort willing to be used to acquire the product. This means that people want the product, but are not willing to do anything about acquiring the product. The levels for liking the product were higher than the middle point, so on average people would like to have the luxury good presented

in the questionnaire. No statistical significance was found on the differences of levels of affinity for the product by young consumers in relation to the type of envy they were feeling, even though the questionnaire showed that respondents were interested in the product in question. The same discovery was made with regards to the effort respondents were willing to make to acquire the product in question.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Main Findings

The main findings of this thesis were that based on the primary research that was done, there was no statistically significant findings to state if envy affects conspicuous consumption. Advanced data analysis was conducted to see if the imaginary situation sparked the willingness to consume for the respondent. The findings were not in line with the evidence found in the literature review where benign envy was a driver for emulation and conspicuous consumption.

On the other hand, combined with ATSCI scale information, benign envy and high score on the ATSCI scale were drivers for high increase in the effort one person was willing to put to acquire the product by conspicuous consumption.

6.2. Limitations

One of the limitations of this thesis could be the questionnaire design. Main reason for the questionnaire design to be challenged is that the findings derived from it were very different to what the literature had to say.

The more specific points that should be looked at are the design of the imaginary situation, and whether or not the story was engaging enough for the respondent to answer the questions as truthfully as possible. It could be that the product of a smart phone is not tempting enough for the respondents to feel the envy towards their similar other. The price point could also be too high for some respondents to feel the envy, and just write the product off as too expensive and unnecessary. In addition, the method of inquiry could have been chosen poorly to suit the type of research being made. The imaginary situation might not have been engaging enough for the respondent in the form of a questionnaire, but if either focus groups or interviews were used, the reactions of respondents could have been more statistically significant.

The sample size might also be too small to draw conclusion that are statistically significant. With 42 respondents in each of the envy conditions, the sample size might be too small for the data analysis to be conducted. Also, the sample was composed of mainly Finnish respondents and it might not have been international enough to give a varied view on the imaginary situation.

6.3. Implications for International Business

The main implications of this thesis are in the area of marketing. This is due to the thesis focusing on finding how envy could be used to attract consumers to consume. If applied correctly, managers could use envy in their marketing campaigns to drive the consumption.

The main implications from this thesis towards international business could be not to incite malicious envy in marketing campaigns. Despite the questionnaire not giving significant results regarding the differences between benign and malicious envy felt by the respondents, it is recommended not to use malicious envy in marketing campaigns. The argument for this was discussed in the literature review. Lange et al. (2018) found that the characteristics of benign envy are for example emulation and that it focuses on bringing the envier up. However, when experiencing malicious envy, the envier is more likely to want to bring the envied down instead of bringing themselves up. Moreover, marketing managers should focus on making the envied seem likeable and able to gain the admiration of the receiver of their marketing message to be able to utilize benign envy.

The importance of social comparison information is intriguing and should be focused on and managers should try to take advantage of it. The more aware a consumer is of social comparison, the more they are willing to minimize any negative social comparison. Combining the effects of benign envy with the effects of social comparison in marketing could raise the amount of effort consumers are willing to use to obtain a certain product.

6.4. Suggestions for Future Research

The suggestions for future research are mainly focused on bettering the questionnaire. Future researchers should try other products and other price points to see if they yield more reliable results with regards to the envy types. For example, a specific item of clothing could be used as the envy object. This could work because of the bigger difference in prices of normal and luxury products in that category. Also, other price points could be tried with different product categories to see if consumers feel more envious at them.

In addition, the better integration of social comparison information is important, because social comparison creates the need for conspicuous consumption.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. The questionnaire

Thesis survey on Envy

This survey is part of my Bachelor's thesis. The survey is created to gather information about young consumers' motivation to purchase goods. The responses are of course completely anonymous.

This survey will only take around 3 minutes to complete and will be a great help for my thesis.

1. Age *

2. Gender *

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say

3. Nationality *

4. Marital status *

- ☐ Single
- ☐ In a relationship
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated

5. Occupation *

- ☐ Working
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Student

6. Education *

- ☐ No education
- ☐ High school
- ☐ University student
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree

7. Imagine that you are at a social gathering with many of your close friends from this school. In the gathering you start talking to your very close friend. You and your friend are of the similar age and have similar interests and do about as well in school.

You start talking and your friend tells you that they have gotten a new phone recently. Your friend shows you the features of their phone, and tells you it cost close to 1000 euros. You decide to ask where did they get the phone.

Your friend had worked hard to earn the money to buy the phone. You start to feel jealous and start to admire your friend.

Now please answer these questions: *

	0 (not at all)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 (definitely)
Would you like to have this product?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much effort would you be willing to spend to acquire it?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think others would like to have this product?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much effort do you think others would be willing to spend to acquire it?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Imagine that you are at a social gathering with many of your close friends from this school. In the gathering you start talking to your very close friend. You and your friend are of the similar age and have similar interests and do about as well in school.

You start talking and your friend tells you that they have gotten a new phone recently. Your friend shows you the features of their phone, and tells you it cost close to 1000 euros. You decide to ask where did they get the phone.

Your friend said that they got it as a gift from their parents. You feel jealous and a bit annoyed by the fact that your friend got it just as a gift.

Now please answer these questions: *

	0 (not at all)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 (definitely)
Would you like to have this product?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much effort would you be willing to spend to acquire it?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think others would like to have this product?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much effort do you think others would be willing to spend to acquire it?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. What was the product in question? *

- ☐ Car
- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Shoes

10. What was the price mentioned? (in euros) *

11. How was the phone acquired? *

- ☐ Gifted
- ☐ Bought by self

12. Rate these statements as they apply to you *

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
It is my feeling that if everyone else in a group is behaving in a certain manner, this must be the proper way to behave.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I actively avoid wearing clothes that are not in style.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At parties I usually try to behave in a manner that makes me fit in.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I am uncertain how to act in a social situation, I look to the behavior of others for cues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try to pay attention to the reactions of others to my behavior in order to avoid being out of place.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find that I tend to pick up slang expressions from others and use them as part of my own vocabulary.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tend to pay attention to what others are wearing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The slightest look of disapproval in the eyes of a person with whom I am interacting is enough to make me change my approach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's important to me to fit in to the group I'm with.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My behavior often depends on how I feel others wish me to behave.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I am the least bit uncertain as to how to act in a social situation, I look to the behavior of others for cues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I usually keep up with clothing style changes by watching what others wear.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When in a social situation, I tend not to follow the crowd, but instead behave in a manner that suits my particular mood at the time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>